

Message Text

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11

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SAM-01

IO-13 /071 W

----- 053905

R 080930Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4595
INFO AMEMBASSY MUSCAT
AMEMBASSY DOHA
AMEMBASSY MANAMA

C O N F I D E N T I A L ABU DHABI 1862

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, TC
SUBJ: UAE INTERNAL AFFAIRS

1. EMBOFF ROBERT COURTNEY AND I RECENTLY RETURNED FROM 3-DAY TRIP TO NORTHERN EMIRATES, DURING WHICH WE CALLED ON SHAIKHS RASHED AND SULTAN AND WERE ENTERTAINED TO LUNCH BY SHAIKH SAQR IN RAS AL-KHAIMAH. ON THE WHOLE, WITH EXCEPTION OF BAD FEELING BETWEEN DUBAI AND SHARJAH OVER QUESTION OF BORDER (ABU DHABI 1452), ATMOSPHERE AMONG RULERS SEEMS FAIRLY RELAXED AT MOMENT. THIS APPEARS MAINLY ATTRIBUTABLE TO COMPROMISE WORKED OUT ON MILITARY "UNIFICATION". AS SHAIKH SAQR SAID, "THE DETAILS OF THE PLAN ARE NOT IMPORTANT; WHAT MATTERS IS THAT SOMETHING WAS WORKED OUT THAT PRESERVED CONFIDENCE AMONG THE RULERS. WE NOW HAVE GREATER ASSURANCE THAT SHAIKH ZAYED WANTS TO PROCEED IN A MANNER THAT TAKES THE VIEW OF THE OTHER RULERS INTO ACCOUNT."

2. SAQR CONFIRMED THAT FORCES UNDER HIS CONTROL--NOW KNOWN AS THE "NORTHERN SECTOR" OF UAE DEFENSE FORCES--ARE TO BE AUGMENTED TO ABOUT 4,000 MEN. HE SAID QUITE OPENLY THAT PURPOSE OF THIS WAS TO PROVIDE EXTRA INSURANCE AGAINST POSSIBILITY OF COUP IN ABU DHABI. OFFICERS FOR THIS AUGMENTED FORCE WOULD ALL BE RAS AL KHAIMANS. MEN WOULD BE RECRUITED FROM ALL OVER,

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WITH SOME PERHAPS BEING TRANSFERRED FROM ABU DHABI DEFENSE

FORCE.

3. SHAIKH SULTAN OF SHARJAH TOLD US THERE HAD BEEN NO PROGRESS IN SETTLING HIS DISPUTE WITH SHAIKH RASHED OVER BORDER. HE HAD ENLISTED SHAIKH ZAYED'S ASSISTANCE BUT SO FAR, ACCORDING TO SULTAN, RASHED DIDN'T SEEM TO WANT TO LISTEN TO ANYONE. SULTAN SAID RASHID WAS SHOWING HIS AGE--THESE FIGHTS OVER FEW KILOMETERS OF TERRITORY WERE MEANINGLESS IN THIS MODERN AGE. WHEN WE ASKED WHETHER SHARJAH'S SPIRITED ECONOMIC COMPETITION COULD BE PART OF EXPLANATION FOR RASHED'S BEHAVIOUR, SULTAN SAID IF SO RASHED WAS MISGUIDED IN HIS TACTICS. "WHEN SOMETHING LIKE THIS HAPPENS I STAY UP UNTIL FOUR IN THE MORNING FIGURING OUT WAYS I CAN TAKE SOME OF DUBAI'S BUSINESS AWAY."

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